



# THE GARRETT GAZETTE

*Congressman Garrett's Newsletter on Issues of Interest to New Jersey's 5th Congressional District*

March 19, 2004

Dear Friend:

Thank you for signing up to receive my newsletter that includes updates on the work I am doing while representing the people of the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional district. Your interest in and comments on the issues that Congress is debating are important to me as I weigh the merits of the legislation that comes before me. Thank you for your thoughts and interest in the legislative process. Please continue to contact myself or my staff to let your voice be heard. Please enjoy this edition.

## House Budget Committee Makes Strong Commitment to Promote Strength for America, Growth for the Economy and Opportunity for the Future

On Wednesday, March 17th the House Committee on the Budget, of which I sit on, passed out of committee a budget resolution for fiscal year 2005. Through the courageous leadership of Chairman Jim Nussle, the committee sent a fiscally responsible budget to the House floor that cuts the deficit in half in the next 4 years with no tax increases.

The committee was given the tough task of putting together a federal budget while the federal government is running numerous deficits. We have a spending deficit because federal spending has increased so rapidly causing the government to spend more money than it takes in; a defense deficit resulting from complete neglect by the Clinton Administration to our men and women in the Armed Services and our Department of Defense; an intelligence deficit that was most tragically brought to the forefront on September 11, 2001; and a growth deficit that began either late 1999 or early 2000 when the economy began to significantly decline.

The single greatest priority we in the committee had was to keep America strong and safe. In the face of unprecedented threats to the nation's domestic and international security, the National Defense and Homeland Security budgets ensure the goals of winning the War on Terrorism, preparing for future challenges and protecting America's homeland are advanced.

This is a budget that while making tough choices, provides the means to ensure our top priorities at home and abroad. We took steps to root out waste, fraud and abuse and kept the final numbers at fiscally responsible levels so that no American family will incur tax increases.

The resolution now moves to the House floor and once passed will then move to be conferenced with the Senate.

## On the One Year Anniversary of the Start of "Operation Iraqi Freedom", the House Takes Time Out to Pay Special Tribute to Our Troops

This week the House debated and passed H.Res.557 which I was honored to vote in favor of. Those Members of Congress in support of this resolution showed their strong support of our fight against terror and commended our Armed Services for all that they have done, including the liberation of Iraq.

Iraq is now free of an evil regime and a madman dictator. The Iraqi people no longer have to fear being murdered and tortured for their political views. Women no longer have to be afraid of a government that turns its head at rape and sexual abuse. The future of Iraq, the children, will now be provided the education and needed medical attention all children deserve.

This resolution:

- affirms that the United States and the world have been made safer with the removal of Saddam Hussein and his regime from power in Iraq;
- commends the Iraqi people for their courage in the face of unspeakable oppression and brutality inflicted on them by Saddam Hussein's regime;
- commends the Iraqi people on the adoption of Iraq's interim constitution; and
- commends the members of the United States Armed Forces and Coalition forces for liberating Iraq and expresses its gratitude for their valiant service.

While the necessity and justification of this war maybe be debated, we must unite as a country to support our troops and thank them for their selfless dedication so that we all may live free. Today, Iraq is free, America is safer, and the world has changed for the better.

## Musconetcong River, an Environmental Treasure Running Through Sussex and Warren Counties, Must be Protected and Preserved

On March 4, I introduced legislation that works to protect and restore the historic Musconetcong River by designating the watershed as a Federal Wild and Scenic River. We have some beautiful land in northwestern New Jersey and I was proud to offer legislation that will work to conserve this stunning river.

This bill will preserve, restore and enhance the outstanding natural resources in the river corridor, including the rare species, floodplains, headwaters and wetlands. This designation protects the existing tributaries, and allows for development that is not damaging to the resources of the river, or the free-flow of the river's current.

The free flowing waters of the Musconetcong River and its scenic and recreational qualities will now be protected, thanks to the cooperative efforts of the Heritage Conservancy, the Musconetcong Watershed Association, the National Park Service and local municipalities. I applaud the hard work of these organizations to safeguard the premier waterways of New Jersey.

## Cleaning up our Airwaves; Our Children Have Seen Enough

Last week, the I voted for, and the House passed legislation to increase the financial penalties which the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) can impose on broadcasters who air obscenity, indecency, and profanity on television and radio.

Our television and radio programs have just gone too far. Public channels, during times when kids can tune in, are airing indecent and offense material. While adults in our free society certainly have a right to view and listen to programming they choose, it is important to protect our children from obscene material that has found its way into common family programming.

This legislation will also remove the warning and allows the FCC to fine networks and entertainers up to a maximum of \$500,000 for a first offense. The bill also mandates that the FCC hold a license revocation hearing after the third offense by a broadcaster (the FCC already has the discretion to conduct revocation hearings, even after a first offense. H.R. 3717 mandates such a hearing after three violations). The FCC may also take into consideration prior violations when licenses come up for renewal.

## Facts of the Week

Initial weekly claims for unemployment insurance fell by 6,000 for the week ending March 13, falling to 336,000 from the prior week's 342,000.

The 336,000 level of claims is the lowest weekly level in over three years -- since the second week of January 2001.

- The report was better than expected as private analysts had anticipated claims at 345,000 for the week ending March 13.

The report confirms the view that the labor market continues to improve. Earlier this week, the Manpower survey showed that, on net, 22 percent of businesses are planning an increase in hiring in the April to June period. This is the best hiring outlook in three years.

## Recent Events in the 5th Congressional District

- On Tuesday, a late blast of winter didn't halt the outdoor press conference at which I announced my sponsorship of legislation to protect and restore the Musconetcong River. Attending were representatives of the Musconetcong Advisory Committee, Musconetcong Watershed Association and the National Parks Service.
- On Saturday, March 13, I joined the crowds at the holiday festivities in Sparta, taking part in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade.
- On March 13th, I also visited Hackettstown Community Hospital, for a luncheon followed by a tour of the nearly completed addition to the medical facility.

## Keep your Calendars open

On Monday, April 19th at 7pm, I will be hosting a Homeland Security/Federal Law Enforcement Seminar with the United States Attorney, Christopher Christie, the United States Marshal James Plousis and the Sheriffs of Bergen, Sussex, Passaic and Warren Counties. The event will be held in the Hall of Heroes at the Bergen County Law and Public Safety Institute 281 Campgaw Road, Mahwah.